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Assassination Sparked Bitter FBI Quarrels

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The FBI became embroiled in bitter controversies with the CIA, the Dallas police and the State Department from the beginning of the investigation into the murders of President John F. Kennedy and of his assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, FBI files now available to the press reveal.

The late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover and several of his top aides became involved in disputes that today appear, with the passage of 14 years, to have been primarily used to evade blame for the security breakdown that led to Kennedy's death. The siege mentality of the FBI as it was in 1963 is implied by the tone and content of some of the 40,000 documents made public yesterday.

Specifically, FBI officials:

- Accused CIA Director John McCone of attacking "the bureau in a vicious and underhanded manner characterized with sheer dishonesty" and suggested "there is a way of putting a stop to all this."
- Charged that Dallas Police Chief Jesse Curry had made false statements about the FBI and that if he did not correct them the FBI in Washington would label the statements as lies.

Decided U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Thomas Mann "may be one of those pseudo-investigators" and called him a Sherlock Holmes be-

cause of statements he made that might have caused the FBI trouble later on.

Hoover himself directed that a Spanish-speaking FBI agent be sent to Mexico City to either refute or prove the allegations of what Oswald had done while in the Mexican capital a few weeks before Kennedy was shot in Dallas. Hoover did not sign the other documents, but Hoover was at the peak of his power in 1963 and was in personal charge of the FBI's investigation of the Kennedy and Oswald deaths.

There also was a considerable contact between the FBI and The Washington Post in the days immediately after the assassination of Kennedy. Assistant to the Director Cartha D. DeLoach was negotiating with the Post to get the newspaper to kill an editorial it was planning to advocate the formation of a presidential commission to investigate the assassination.

THE DELOACH MEMO does not say how the FBI knew the Post was planning such an editorial but made it clear that Hoover opposed a commission because he personally was supervising investigation at the request of President Lyndon B. Johnson.

The Post's managing editor promised DeLoach the editorial would be eliminated but the editor, J. Russell Wiggins, said only that he was inclined to go along with the FBI request without making a commitment.

Johnson, however, decided to create what became the Warren Commission despite Hoover's objections.

The CIA-FBI collision had its origin over Oswald's trip to Mexico City, and what he did there, a few weeks before the Dallas slayings. Mexico City is one of the few world capitals where the FBI and CIA overlap on intelligence matters and both maintain well-manned offices.

D.J. Brennan Jr., an aide to the late Assistant Director William C. Sullivan, wrote his boss on Dec. 19, 1963, that the best way to protect FBI interests with the CIA was "a firm and forthright confrontation." He wrote in a memo to Sullivan that McCone had "allegedly informed Congressman Jerry Ford that the CIA had uncovered a plot in Mexico City indicating that Lee Harvey Oswald had received \$6,500 to assassinate President Kennedy."

He wrote that McCone had also made that statement to columnist Drew Pearson, but that the statements were false and "McCone should have known they were false since his agency was fully informed that the story concerning the receipt of the money in Mexico was completely discredited."

BRENNAN SUGGESTED that the FBI liaison agent, Sam Papich, confront McCone and said he believed McCone would "know where he stands and have a profound respect for our capabilities to be informed."

It is generally conceded that Oswald went to Mexico City, tried unsuccessfully to get into the Cuban and Soviet embassies to seek help in going back to the Marxist world. The facts in dispute in the first frantic days after Kennedy's death were over a report given both the CIA and FBI in Mexico City that Oswald had met with Cuban agents at an open air nightclub there and accepted more than \$6,000 in cash from them.

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Sources at the CIA had informed The Washington Star of this report within 72 hours of Kennedy's death, but the story was not printed because the FBI said the informant was known to them as untrustworthy. The man was Nicaraguan who was trying to earn an informer's fee and had made up the story, according to FBI officials with whom The Star checked at that time. The CIA called it an uncorroborated report and let it go at that.

Behind the controversy lay the very deep concern in Washington that angry Americans might demand a punitive strike against Fidel Castro if the story was printed about Cubans paying Oswald a large sum of money just before he shot Kennedy.

No one in the press or general public knew at that time that the CIA was actively trying to use Mafia members and Cuban exiles to assassinate Castro and that higherups in the Kennedy administration had given the project their blessing. Brennan's message to Sullivan came close to the edge of threatening McCone with some kind of retaliation for what it called his "nefarious activity."

The controversy involving Dallas Police Chief Jesse Curry erupted in the very first hours after Kennedy was slain when Curry was interviewed on television and made some comments that outraged FBI officials.

Curry had said, according to an internal memo written by DeLoach, that the FBI had Oswald under surveillance in Dallas before the shooting but did not notify Dallas police, that the FBI had recently interviewed Oswald, and that the FBI customarily advised Dallas police whenever an individual of subversive background arrived in town.

DeLoach ORDERED FBI Special Agent in Charge Gordon Shanklin to tell Curry if he didn't go back on television and inform the wire services immediately that his charges were false, the FBI in Washington would call these "false statements" a lie.

DeLoach wrote, "I asked him (Shanklin) if he knew why Chief Curry would make such stupid statements. Shanklin stated that Curry was usually very cooperative, a very good friend of the FBI, however, did not think very fast and obviously made the statements without giving any thought to the repercussions."

It has subsequently become known that Curry was correct in saying the FBI had known Oswald was in Dallas and Special Agent James Hosty had been to Oswald's house and had interviewed Oswald's Russian-born wife, Marina. This, it is now known, so incensed Oswald that he wrote a threatening note to the FBI. Hosty's name and phone number were found in Oswald's possession after Kennedy was killed.

The insistence that Curry withdraw his so-called "false" statements is even stranger in light of a memo from Assistant FBI Director A.H. Belmont to Hoover's alter ego, the late Clyde Tolson, written the same day that Kennedy died.

This memo said the Dallas FBI office knew at the outset that Oswald was the subject of an internal security-Cuba case, that he worked at the Texas School Book Depository from where the fatal shots were fired, and that FBI agents had interviewed Oswald twice regarding his stay in Russia and whether he was given an assignment by the Russians.

The FBI, according to the Belmont memo on Nov. 22, 1963, knew about his stay in the Soviet Union, his membership in the pro-Castro Fair Play for Cuba Committee, his arrest in New Orleans and even that he had a violent temper and a new baby. Shanklin, according to the memo, said this information had been furnished by the Dallas police.

The mystery is why Curry apologized for saying the FBI had not told the Dallas police about Oswald before Kennedy was killed, which it may not have done. But at least half of the Curry statement appears to have been accurate and perhaps all of it was.

THE IRONY OF the matter is that Belmont closed his memo by instructing Shanklin to have the FBI agents who knew Oswald present when he was questioned. In 1963 it was not a federal crime to shoot a president of the United States, and the assassination was in the sole jurisdiction of the Dallas police in whose station a hanger-on named Jack Ruby killed Oswald less than 48 hours after Kennedy was slain.

After Oswald's death the FBI got in its final dig at the Dallas police. On Nov. 27 one of Hoover's top aides, C.L. McGowan, telephoned instructions to the FBI in Dallas.

So THAT Hoover could prepare a full memorandum for President Johnson, the Dallas FBI was instructed to send a massive amount of information to Washington. Among the information desired, the memorandum said, was police involvement, the police connections of Ruby and the connection between Ruby and the officer killed by Oswald, Pvt. J.D. Tippitt.

FBI in Washington also wanted to know the nature of security provided in the areas and the admission of outsiders, presumably to the Dallas police station where Oswald was killed.

Although Hoover in responding to letters immediately following the assassination pointed out that the Secret Service and not the FBI was responsible for presidential protection he quickly gained control of the bureaucratic battle, according to the FBI files.

The Secret Service quickly made it understood that the FBI was in charge of the investigation, although presidential protection is the responsibility of the Secret Service and assassination of a president was not a federal offense until legislation was enacted after Kennedy's assassination.

Hoover responded to several indignant correspondents who blamed the FBI by pointing out that the bureau was not responsible for the assassination. Secret Service Chief James J. Rowley told the FBI, however, that "there is no question but that the FBI is completely handling the Oswald investigation and his service is ready to assist in anyway," according to the FBI files.

Rowley also is quoted as saying that "during the heat of battle" immediately following the assassination "his service may have covered some leads which should have been given to the bureau, but this was not done in any attempt to take away the FBI's jurisdiction."

THREE DAYS AFTER the assassination Hoover ordered the FBI to make a full report on Oswald public as fast as possible, according to the FBI files. Hoover not only believed that Oswald was Kennedy's sole assassin, the files indicate, but also that Hoover had questions about how the U.S. government helped Oswald return from the Soviet Union and about what Oswald was doing in Mexico City shortly before the assassination.

Hoover's memo raised questions about "such things as the return of the passport to Oswald in Moscow and the furnishing of money to him by the State Department for the purpose of returning to the United States."